

Forgiveness

by Don McClure

Jesus teaches us that forgiveness is essential to our relationship with God and that choosing to forgive others as we have been forgiven allows us to experience a deeper and more intimate connection with Him.

Duration: 49:24

Scripture: Leviticus 23:29, Joel 1:14, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Forgiveness", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the concept of forgiveness and how it relates to our relationship with God. He emphasizes that forgiveness is not a suggestion, but a commandment from God. He uses the parable of the servant who owed a large debt to his king to illustrate the importance of forgiveness. The speaker also touches on the topics of prayer, fasting, and giving, highlighting their significance in deepening our relationship with God. Overall, the sermon encourages listeners to embrace forgiveness and seek a closer connection with God through these spiritual practices.

Transcript

Tonight, Matthew chapter 6, verse 14. For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypocrites of a sad countenance, for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward. But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not to fast to men, but to thy Father, which is in secret.

And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly. Father, we do thank you for your word, and we thank you, dear Lord, for your wonderful love, your great desire, Lord, to be so close to us. Lord, to think that not only you love us and you've sent your Son to die for us, forgiven our sins, but Lord, the relentless loving way that you have of desiring to take us into a wonderful, deep, mature, strong relationship with you, and to give us, Lord, great blessing in life, great victory over our trials, over the battles.

And Lord, you have given to us your word to help us in these things, and we ask that you continue to open your word to speak to us, to minister to us, to strengthen us, Father. We thank you for it, in Jesus' name.

Amen.

Well, here, as we continue on in Matthew chapter 6 here, in the Sermon on the Mount, there's three areas here that we'll just kind of touch on a little bit here tonight of spiritual life--prayer, and fasting, and giving a little bit, just that I think ties into it that we've already been going through. But something there, perhaps, just to take a moment and to reflect and remember about the Sermon on the Mount. I don't know how interesting the Bible is to a person that isn't a Christian.

I think it ought to be tremendous reading to anybody, but that's how I think. But to a child of God, I suppose the Sermon on the Mount ought to be one of the greatest of all things to read, because it is this wonderful, short, three chapters that God gives to us to show us great insights into a deeper and a greater relationship with him. That so many of the struggles, and the battles, and the things that we have going on in our life constantly, that sometimes we can get wrapped up in for days, or weeks, or months, or years of our life and still not solve the Sermon on the Mount if we would study it and learn from it.

It gives to us such great keys to take us not only into a deeper relationship with Christ, but a more full life, a richer life, and great blessings in many, many areas in our life. And so here in the Sermon on the Mount, though, it's really, particularly in chapter 6, to me, I almost call it, in my own thoughts, life with our Father. In fact, there was, I think, a TV show when I was a kid, Life with Father, something like that.

But I suppose if you really want to look at what life with Father is all about, it's Matthew 6, and the whole Sermon on the Mount on it, but particularly here, Matthew chapter 6. Not so much life with men. Here, Jesus, in this chapter, He's telling us, don't worry about men. Don't worry about living your life before men.

To be seen of men. Over and over, He said, there's this great tendency of people to want to live and to be seen before men, and to have the rewards in their life before men, to have the greatest experiences of their life before human beings. Jesus said, what a waste of time.

How we ought to be ones that we want the greatest blessings, the greatest victories to happen in our life before God, before our Father. Not so much with people. And we need not to be, we need to not be deceived by those things.

And looking for victory in that area, we ought to be looking, God, show me how to have a deeper and more victorious relationship with you. That's where I want to shine. That's where I want to learn.

That's where I want to grow. And here, in the Sermon on the Mount, it's not so much a list of things of do's and don'ts, as much as it's things of, which the Lord tells us, this is how I want you to think. I want you to pattern your life.

How to let God, you know, work deeply within you, and not so much what you know, but it's who you know, and building that great relationship, you know, with the Lord. And so here, you know, the Lord who outlives all the other issues in life wants to take us with Him, and deeper with Him. And so Jesus here is giving us now, as we just finished up last week, this wonderful prayer, the Lord's prayer, or the family prayer, whatever you want to call it there, as He gives to us a pattern and an approach to God in prayer.

In the midst of that, in the middle of it, virtually there, He gives one little comment there, and He says, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And then He goes on after He touches, you know, this area. But then after He says, you know, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever, He then says, amen, of course.

And then here in verse 14, is now He's through teaching that, but now He comes back to something. Now He takes one little nugget out of the Lord's prayer. One little thing, as great and as awesome as this prayer is, you could go back and illuminate on any part of it, but there's one part, it's like He can't let it go, He's got to go back and bring it back as if it's some major issue to heaven, as if there's some major thing that God, when He watches us pray, and He watches us live, and He watches us walk in other areas to where we can grow so much, but there's almost this area that keeps dragging us down, and He says, I want to come back and talk for a moment almost about that, is what He's saying there.

And then He says in verse 14, He says, for if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. And here He's telling us there that after He's talked about prayer and the pattern for prayer, now He comes back and He wants to talk to us about the tremendous importance of forgiveness, the tremendous centrality of developing within our life an ability, a capacity, a desire, a love to forgive, and to forgive all people around us. And here I believe that this is because one of the things that's so important about this is forgiveness is one of the Lord's deepest attributes.

It's one of His greatest and most wonderful of qualities. It's one of the things that He also, I believe, looks in us, therefore, that this capacity that He has with you and I day after day after day, all day, His love, His forgiveness is so powerful that we can find ourself living and walking before Him and coming into His presence. And though meantime, we, how many times do we blow it all day? How many failures do we have constantly? Sins of commission, where we just committed something, omitted, you know, what we should have said and should have done and the constant failures.

And yet we still come easily before God, not there to where God just simply, when we would come in there, He's sitting there tapping away as if we're trying to talk and He's, wait a minute, don't, don't, don't, don't, don't talk to me. Well, you know, and what's wrong? Well, you guess, just what do you think's wrong? You know, and, and yet He is so forgiving. He doesn't play games with us.

He, we just have this concept in this reality of God that He is so loving, He is so forgiving. It's just so deeply ingrained into His nature and His character and His being that He's so approachable, even after we have failed and failed and failed and failed, we can still turn right around and say, Lord, I need your help. And instead of saying, I don't think so, you know, or try again, how stupid do you think I am? You know, or something like that never does it.

He helps us. He leads us. He works within us constantly without saying, wait a minute, do you realize how you failed me? You didn't, do you, do you see what you just did? Did you see this? Do you see this? And you blew it and blew it.

And now you just want me to forgive you? Well, His forgiveness is so great that sometimes we take it for granted. But here in a sense, what Jesus is saying, I wish you had that quality and you ought to wish you had it too. That within your heart and your life, that people would almost just know your love, your forgiveness is so profound, is so intense, is so great that they would take it for granted.

That you are just so quick to forgive and you love forgiving. It's ingrained within your nature and your character. And of course, that's one of the great battles that many have.

Matthew 18 in verse, well, you know the story, but in Matthew 18, there of where Jesus, Peter comes to Jesus, he said, Lord, how many times should we forgive? And then he throws out the number seven, you know, as if that would really be wonderful, you know, and then Jesus says, no, Peter, 70 times, seven

innumerable times, just you forgive and you forgive and you forgive you just, just don't keep counting others. It's not a suggestion of 70 times, 490 times. And I mean, we just sit there with somebody and say, well, that's, that's 104, you know, or something, or, you know, and as if we're just waiting to see when we get to 490, there's no way you can keep track.

So forget it, he's saying. And here is he is trying to bring this concept into our life. He gives the little parable in the story there of the, you know, the, the master there that had the servants, this King.

And when he goes and he takes an account of them, and he does some reckoning on it, he realized here's one that owes him maybe equivalent to like \$10 million, depending on who you use, whose figures you use, but this vast amount of money. And when the fella can't pay him and he throws himself on his mercy to his King, he's, I'm sorry, please forgive me. I don't know what to do.

Give me a chance and I'll do everything I can. And, and the King just forgave him. And then the fella goes on and then there's a fella that owns him some money, you know, just a few bucks.

And then he says, where is it? Give me the money. And the guy, he said, I, he couldn't pay any fault. He's I'm sorry, please, you know, and he said, I don't care, throw him in prison.

And here is Jesus gives this illustration, this fella that was just forgiven, you know, more than he could earn in a hundred lifetimes. And all of a sudden now somebody comes along and in, in some little thing happens and he can't forgive him. And, and here, I believe one of the important parts about this illustration to me that many times we overlook is I don't believe we will ever in this lifetime be ever asked to forgive any human being anywhere near the amount that God has already forgiven every one of us.

There isn't a sin that we haven't failed against God. There is all the commandments. We've broken them.

We've loved other gods. We've worshiped other gods. We're guilty of spiritual adultery.

We murdered in our heart. We have done virtually every iniquitous thing in God looks at us and he forgives and forgives all the sins that are humanly capacity capable. We've done it through our lifetime to God.

And in the process of living, somebody here hurts us and somebody does this, but nobody will ever. I don't care how terrible what it is that human beings have done to human beings and they have done some terrible things. But in the sense though of as wicked as they are compared to the wickedness of my iniquitous, of my corrupt, of my sinful heart and on how God looks and he says, I forgive you.

I don't hang them out before you. Oh, if anybody could make somebody feel guilty, let's think of what God could do to you and me. And he doesn't, he doesn't.

He makes us feel loved. And then he, then people offend us and hurt us and do things. And he says, now forgive, you know, this is Mount over here.

And then we can't, and we won't do it. And then here, the interesting thing is Jesus, of course, closes off that when now this man there that is in the, in the illustration of the parable. Now, when he now doesn't forgive this other guy, he drags him in and the king then turns and his Lord was wroth.

He delivered him under his tormentors until he should pay all that was due unto him. He says, all right, here he looks at him and he said, now you, because you will not forgive as you have been forgiven. Now

I'm going to let your tormentors deal with you.

And, you know, I think that one of the greatest things that happens to a person that doesn't forgive is we end up getting delivered ourselves into our own torment, you know, our own torture chamber, somebody there that will not, cannot refuse to forgive for whatever reason we walk away. And in the very process of doing that, we have delivered ourselves unto our own torture chamber. There to where we, you know, that person, you, you, I can't believe what they, man, I don't even don't mention their name and how we go on and we can go on for weeks and months, sometimes years.

There with people that we refuse to forgive. And there we still hold on to it and how easily people can let us down. I have a dear friend that his, his dad, he's so mad at his dad and his dad was raising him.

His daddy grew up, you know, went through the depression, went through wars. And there's somebody there really feel he felt like, my God, I've got to get my kids an education. That's what I got to do.

I got to get him an education and I got to teach him. And he's got, I've got to get him a job. I've got to help him make it in this life.

And he was hard on him to the kids accounting. And there he made him study and he made him go through school and he made him get an education. And he was so mad at his dad.

You couldn't believe it. Furious at his father and all the time because his dad didn't play ball with him and he wasn't here and he wasn't there. And we didn't go fishing together and we didn't ride bikes together.

And the things that a fatherless son ought to do according to him. And he decided, you know, when I, that's not how I'm going to be when I got my kids, my kids there, we're going to ride bikes together and we're going to mow the lawn together and we're going to do stuff together and we're going to have vacations together and we're going to fish together. And we're, and, you know, interestingly enough, he did all of that.

He really did. And he was, he, I was quite astounding. A lot of people say they're what they're going to do.

But the interesting thing about it is I watched this go on over many years, several decades is that here, this guy, by the way, he did succeed. He's a multimillionaire. And, uh, there, uh, and his, uh, and, but the interesting thing is, is with his kid is he raises his son and they're buddies and they're close.

The only thing that makes him mad though, is his kid can't do anything without him. He's a full-on adult and got children of his own. I'm always drugstalking this kid.

He can't do a thing without me. You know, and I don't know what's going on with it. And he's complaining about his kid.

And he's mad at his kid. He's mad at his father and he's mad at his kid. And one time he's telling me this, I'm just laughing.

And he says, what is so funny? I said, you, you're hilarious. You're angry at everybody, both sides. And he said, what do you mean? And I said, you're mad at your dad because he made you study, made you get an education, made you do all this.

I'll bet every time you go to the bank, you just take that check and you just put it in there and say, put it in there. I just hate this money. My dad made me earn it.

I'm so mad at him. All these millions of dollars. I'm furious, you know, over at him.

You're upset with him over what he did the best he could. And now you, your poor kid who you, you, boy, you bait his hooks and you bait his business. You bait everything with him and you ride bikes with him and you're constantly putting air in his life and keeping it going.

And you're mad at him because he can't do anything without you. So who's right? And he looked at me and he said, not you. And that was the end of that conversation.

So he's mad at me too. But the, but I have so many people, I mean, life is life and life happens. And when I look at people constantly holding children or holding parents hostage to their anger, to their failures, you did this to me.

You know, get over it. People are people and people fail. And all, no matter what you do, how you think, you know, you ought to do it.

And you maybe go out and try or somebody let you down or whatever else. But when you watch people, sometimes their entire lifetime, sometimes mad at people who loved him, who cared, who tried and failed, according to somebody's opinion anyway. And here is Jesus saying, I'll tell you something.

The one that's really going to get hurt is the one that can't forgive, not the one who might have failed or maybe not, but the one that goes on whose life is going to be paralyzed, whose life is going to be tormented, whose life is never going to get anywhere, is the one there that constantly has the excuse of the person that failed them and that they're angry at. And they can't and won't forgive. They're going to have the most crippled and most pathetic and most tormented of lives.

And here, Jesus, he's simply saying here to us, he says, oh, that there could be this capacity to forgive, this desire to forgive, this love of forgiving there. And when we so often we pray and we on one hand, part of our lips, we come out and we say, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Here in heaven, this love, this forgiveness, this fullness of it that is there for every single one of us.

And then when out of one side of my mouth, I say, God, I want right here on earth, just like things are in heaven. And then right here on earth is somebody right next to me I'm having a difficult time with or a bad opinion about. And I won't forgive him.

And then the life with father is going to get restricted right there. Life going on with communion with God and a wonderful abiding fellowship and relationship with him. It's going to be crippled.

And here is one of the great tests of what do I really, truly want in life? Do I want no human being to ever fail me or anybody that ever did to go any up, pay it all up. You get the books right. And of course, I never want to get right what I've done, but everybody what they owe me.

I want that. And Jesus have to say, if that's what you want, you don't really want life with your father. You don't want a great relationship with God.

God doesn't try to sit there and work out the books. God has a heart and he is somebody that looks at people and he says, I love you. And do you want that's heaven? That's what's heaven's all about.

I forgive you. I want you home more than I want any opinion about you. That's negative.

I want to be close to you. I want to have fellowship and communion with you. I want to be a part of you and forget the past.

Forget it is I'll find a way to get it all done and blot it all out. If you want it. And if you desire it and how it is that sometimes, you know, we, this is a great problem here.

Jesus, after he says he reprints this prayer and then he comes back and he grabs onto a piece of it and the concept of it. And he says, forgiveness is if to look there and put this great emphasis on it. He says, don't you get it? Because how easily in this life we can be angry or we can be judgmental and we can walk almost in a judgmental spirit or an attitude in our relationships or in our homes or the people we work around.

And the next thing, you know, it not only separates us from them. Separates us from fellowship with God walks. The whole thing that we've been trying to build and wanting to have a stronger relationship with him.

Then as soon as I walk right out of that, and there's so-and-so there's my father at one end or my kid at the other end, or there's somebody to work with or, you know, somewhere else out there. And the next thing, you know, there's, you know, we, our prayers are hindered. Our walk is hindered our fellowship with God.

And next thing, you know, I'm not, no, I don't want to love my wife. I don't want to forgive my children. No, I don't want to do the people at work.

And we're angry and we're judgmental or in some people, they're just angry at people in general. They don't even know who they're angry at yet. I just started, but give me time.

You know, almost as the way some people are, they just get up and they can almost go, you know, they just, they're just, they're just anger waiting for an object, you know, to focus on. They're just judgmental, you know, just looking, you know, for that. And, and, and they'll find an excuse, but forgiveness is just the opposite.

It looks there for an excuse to be forgiving and an opportunity to be forgiving. And then, and the reason I want to carry this on and put these two together here tonight is that I believe that here, the issue of forgiveness in fasting though, you know, it's not, it's not another thought like, Oh, I'm going off into another thing here. But moreover, he says, when you fast, be not as the hypocrites, because you see the reason I think this is so tightly united is that sometimes forgiving people is still not sufficient in the sense there.

It doesn't solve everything. Sometimes after we have forgiven people, there's still more work spiritually to do that God allows. And so here, right after he teaches us to pray, right after he says, do you want a deep relationship? Here's how you can have it with God.

And if you want to keep it, you've got to be forgiving to people around you. And then he goes right from there into the concept of fasting. And it's something that's quite a, just a, it's in the Bible very, very extensively.

Sometimes we don't see it or we just go past it quickly, but I just want to give you some of the occasions here. And then we're going to go back and look at it. One of the more famous ones, I suppose, you know, when Jonah went to Nineveh and he came to Nineveh there and he told them there, he says, you got 40 days and you're going to be destroyed.

And no sooner did that happen. And then the people there, the, uh, the people in Nineveh, they believe God. They thought, you know, we are guilty.

We're going to be destroyed. And they proclaim a fast and they put on sackcloth off all the way from the greatest under the least of all the people word gets all the way to the king, uh, you know, there, and, and he finds himself there. He's in sackcloth, he's in ashes, all of the whole town of Nineveh, the whole city and sackcloth and ashes and fasting, crying out to God saying, who could tell if God will turn and repent and turn away from his fierce anger that we pierce, that we, uh, perish not.

And then it says after they did this great work of fasting in a prayer that God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way and God repented of his evil that he said he would do unto them. And he did it not. Now some would look at that and say, well, see prayer and fasting, it changes God's mind.

Well, that you can figure that out on your own. I'm not sure. So sure.

As much as I don't know that it changed God's mind. I think that they're the threat change their mind and put it in a moment when they now could get to the same mind that had always been of God's and desire to bless them. But if you don't want to bless you, you'll, you'll, you're going to be in trouble.

But if you want to seek blessing, you can have it. Isn't so much. He changed his mind.

Just what side of me do you want to meet? And, uh, the next thing, you know, though, they found through faith through prayer and fasting that it brought them into a dimension and a concept in a relationship with God where God could now bless them. And God can now preserve them in prayer and fasting is a very, very powerful thing. It changes at least our mind.

It changes our heart in such a way as God can do some great things and wonderful things. A number of times, the children of Israel, when they were in battle and judges 20 and verse 26, it says, and all the children of Israel and all the people where they went up and they came to the house of God and they wept and they sat before the Lord and they fasted that day until evening and offered a burnt offering and peace offerings for the Lord and the children of Israel inquired of the Lord for the ark of the covenant of God was there those days. And Phineas, the son of Eliezer, the son of Aaron stood before it these days saying, shall I yet go into battle? And then it goes on and says, and the Lord said, go up for tomorrow.

I will deliver them under that hand. But here they're in the, they're in a time of battle themselves. And as they're in a battle and they're looking there at this, the struggle of the battle and that's great sense of potential for defeat.

They find themselves coming in fasting and praying. And then as they did that, they were moved to offer burnt offerings and sacrifices to God. And then they asked God, how is it going to go? What is going to happen? Shall we head into this battle? And the Lord tells him, yes, I'll give you a victory.

And so often when there's battles with the children of Israel, one time when the Moabites, the Ammonites, they combined together against Jehoshaphat, he proclaimed a fast. And there's the people came and they

fasted and they prayed and they sought the Lord throughout all of Judah. Then there God worked and did wonderful things.

Joel called for a fast at a time of national calamity. I haven't got time to read all these tonight, but here when God is just honestly sought after and there's a particular blessing or supply or a need that is needing. Joel 1.14 says, sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders of all the inhabitants of the land of the house of the Lord your God and cry unto the Lord.

Here he said you fast and then you cry out, you pray and you seek God. And on the annual atonement for sin, when forgiveness was sought after in Leviticus 23.29, it says, for whatsoever soul shall it be that shall not be afflicted in that same day, he should be cut off from among the people. Here did God look there at this day.

He said, I want you to take this day. And he says, and if you don't, in a sense, and he uses the word afflict there, used to deny yourself. He says, you turn off all of this other stuff you think you need and come and seek me.

I'll work in trial sometimes in our life. David, when his son was sick and dying, we're told there that the David there, when his child with Bathsheba was dying, the David fasted all night, says he laid upon the earth, the child died. And God didn't change his mind on that particular situation there.

But David accepted and he understood. Sometime in fasting, you may not always get what it is that you want, but I believe that what you will get is something there when you're out there open and before God and seeking him. You may not always get what you want, but you'll perceive God's wisdom in God's hand in what it is that he is doing.

And you'll find yourself brought to a place where you can accept some things that otherwise would be horrendous, perhaps. And another occasion when David was under attack in Psalm 30, 35, 13, it says, for as for me, when they were sick, my clothing was sackcloth. I humbled my soul and fasted in my prayer, returned into my own bosom.

I have behaved myself as though I had been, as though he had been my friend or brother. I bowed down heavily as one that mourneth for his mother. Here, David, he looks there, he says, God, I came and I sought you and I fasted and I prayed there and I found myself being brought into where I was like a dear friend with you.

Brought so close and, you know, through this experience. When Nehemiah was just told about the children of Israel and the terrible circumstances that they were experiencing back in the land when they were sent out from the captivity to go back in the affliction and the reproach that the situation was in back in Jerusalem, Nehemiah fasted. But then during this time of fasting, God began to move his heart, touch his heart about rebuilding the wall and through fasting, he actually discovered his ministry.

What it was that God had for him there when God took him there, set him aside and then commissioned him essentially to be the one that was going to go out and do this. So often we need wisdom, we need guidance. God, what do you want me to do with my life? And we're just moaning and groaning and wondering and looking at want ads and going here and going there and not that we don't do those as well.

But here are some times where you just go before God and you fast and you pray. When Daniel wanted deliverance for the children of Israel that were in captivity in Babylon, he fasted in Daniel 9, 3. And in the

New Testament, you find there are a number of occasions. Anna, it tells us she departed not from the temple, but she served God with fasting and prayers day and night and yet and out of that God revealed to her the Messiah.

And Luke, pardon me, Acts chapter 10, when Cornelius was looking for more insight into God and the Messiah. He was fasting and not even so much there as a saved man, but a man hungry for God. He already sensed, I just want to see God with my whole heart and he did and God honored it.

And when the church wanted greater blessing in Acts 13, upon their servants, they fasted and prayed. In Acts 14, when Paul and Silas were both about when they're about to establish local churches, they fasted and they prayed asking God's power in his presence. And so in fasting through the Bible is virtually synonymous with prayer.

You basically always find them together. And it's something there essentially that when somebody, when you look at all the times that when somebody there is looking for God's help, looking for his wisdom, looking for his power, looking for victory in a battle, looking for guidance on what to do in their life, looking for God's blessing and longing deeply and wonderfully and profoundly. They need a work of forgiveness or of restoration of their lives of an enemy to be destroyed or whatever it may be.

They oftentimes there's fasting in prayer. Now what is fasting? Here's the occasion of it. What is it? Well, essentially all that fasting is, is simply denying our body.

It's basic requirements. The things that our body just, I need it feed me. I got a right to it.

You got to have it, but it's a deliberate act of saying in a sense to our own body and a work of self denial. No, it's never to injure the body. You don't ever find that in the Bible.

In fact, Colossians 2 23 calls it the neglecting of the body, not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh. And here, in other words, as Paul kind of describes it, he says, well, you're neglecting your body. And in other words, so that you aren't in a deliberate attempt not to honor the flesh, you're saying, you know, I want to find the switch inside my heart, inside my life, where the flesh, my opinion, my thought, my feeling, this is what I think needs to happen.

Here's how this has got to be solved. That's what this person needs. And I just wouldn't, I don't want to know what I think.

I want to, I don't want to know what I feel. I don't want to know any of my own desires. God, I am so messed up inside.

I want your hand, your guidance. How can I just turn off my own mechanisms and start to turn on heaven? That's what fasting seems to do in the Bible. It is something there that is a deliberate shutting down of the physical aspects, you might say, of life to desire to open up the spiritual.

I want to know what heaven thinks about this. I want God's hand on this. And so it's something there that one of the things it does, I believe it just blesses God.

It blesses God in a sense, when he sees somebody that comes away, they want something so much as that they move away from the comforts, they move away from the crowd, they move away from the entertainment and the activity and all the fun stuff or everything else in life and say, you know, God, I got a

problem and I need your help. And I just want to walk away from all of this other stuff. I don't know what it's saying to me and what it's doing and how it clouds me and and gives me opinions.

But how can I just step away from this and sit before you? And I'm not interested in my own nourishment or my own pleasure, my own entertainment or my own health, you know, or strength. At this point, you'll take care of all that. But I believe it blesses God.

It blesses us when we do it. It also helps us to think reestablished priorities in life. So often in the Bible, you'll see somebody there that when they fast and they're seeking God, God's every time they walk away with some area reprioritized, some area spoken to some issue, something in their life that they come away with and say, yes, that's what I needed.

And when somebody decides that this is what they need in life and then virtually all the time or a great percentage of the time, there's their spiritual power. Spiritual victory, spiritual understanding. And and sometimes these things only come through fasting and prayer.

It's like one time when Jesus sent the disciples out and they're casting out demons and preaching the gospel and doing the work of the ministry. But then they come back and they said, Lord, we went and cast out some demons. They wouldn't come out and they described the whole thing.

And he said, Jesus, no, these are only going to come out with prayer and fasting. And here is something there where he's looking there and he says, some of these things, he says, we haven't seemingly set them up in situations. No, some of the events in life.

I'm going to require you to walk away from the other ways, you know, and loving and caring and praying and doing all the other things that you can do day by day and sitting around eating your meals, having a good time, watching sports, doing your thing, doing business. Sometimes in life, I'm going to set it up where you got to step aside. You got to come out from everything else, sit before me and seek me and then we'll see.

And this is where I think for, you know, a 21st century Christian, this is tough because we're kind of microwave type of Christians. God, I want blessing and I want it now. God, I need an answer.

I need it now. Everything's now. I got to have it now.

God, give me, what's its cost? I'll write a check. You know, where can I go? Who can counsel me? I need an opinion. I need five opinions.

I need, you know, we'll go anywhere oftentimes and do anything as long as we can get it done now. We hate to wait, you know, but I imagine one of the reasons FedEx is so rich is people can't wait. I got overnighted, just overnight it.

And we're waiting for heaven to open up a FedEx, you know, or something there. You know, God, I need help and I need it now. And he says, no, there's this, this is, this is one of the, we, we do, we send this by land, you know, and this is going to come and it's going to come slow because I love you because I'm going to slow you down.

Though you live in a world that doesn't want to be slowed down, but I'm going to make you, I'm going to bring you to where you just got to set aside because God has set up life. I believe that some things in life

are only solved by him. No amount of friendship, no amount of other people praying for you, no amount of counsel, no amount of somebody else's encouragement, no amount of somebody else's wisdom or all these other things will, will, will really solve it.

I believe God deliberately has this way of setting things up to where nobody else can help you but him. Others can love you and pray for you, but he says, won't work. Others can read your verses and have, here, put this on your refrigerator, won't work.

You can forgive and love and do all sorts, won't work. And sometimes God, I think, shuts down the whole rest of the world and all of its attempts to do anything just to where you're just going to go to him and nobody else is going to understand or help you. You ever have those type of experiences? Well, I think it's just so we might go to him.

Now we oftentimes get frustrated when all the other things don't work, though. And I just, actually, a couple weeks ago, I, we had a 36-inch box tree that we were going to plant, and I had to dig a hole 36 inches, bigger than that, so we could get this tree in the ground. 36 by 36 by 30, and then a little bigger.

And somehow or another, I messed my back up digging this 36 by 36 by 36 hole. And I, next day, I come walking in, and we have a staff meeting here, and I come in, and they're Chuck and John and Brian. They look at me, and somebody says, what's wrong? I said, oh man, I'll tell you, I, I messed my, I had to dig a hole 36 by 36 by 36 yesterday, and, and here my back is hurting, and I no sooner have just, there, and John Corson, you know that, you ever, you think he's a nice guy, I know, you sort of, and with John Corson, he's sitting here, he says, oh man, he says, I'll tell you, when I was a little kid, one time, my dad, you can't believe this, he dug, all summer long, he dug a swimming pool with a, with a shovel and a, in a wheelbarrow, dug an entire swimming pool, you know, sort of a thing.

And I'm sitting there with my 36-inch hole, you know, sort of thinking about this thing, but no sooner has John go through his whole story than Brian, who you maybe also think is a nice fella, I don't know, but anyway, Brian, all of a sudden, oh man, I said, what, we got a doughboy pool, one time, for my, our kids, when we're, they were young, and I decided we're going to sink it down a little bit, and he says, man, I went down for the whole side of this thing, you know, went down a foot, and man, digging that thing, and I'm just sitting here watching these guys, and then Chuck, who you also probably think is a nice, he speaks up, not to be outdone by those guys, he says, you know, one time, I wanted to, I put a study up on top of my garage in the city, made us, made me do this whole new

footing for this thing, and it was five feet wide, and it was seven feet deep, and I'm down there at the bottom of this whole, you, when you got down there at seven, and you got to get the shovel, and I'm sitting there thinking about my 36-inch box tree that, and I'm hurting, you know, and they're, and they're getting to seven feet, and it was at least 2,000 feet long, you know, or something, you know, I mean, I'm just sitting there listening, I dug it with a spoon, you know, or something, you know, plastic, you know, or whatever, I mean, I'm just sitting there, and no mercy, no, no love, no help, no encouragement, not a bit, you know, and finally, I just said, all right, just leave me alone, you know, and my back is fine, you know, and I just sat there, and this whole thing, but

sometimes, you know, we can, you know, we can laugh at that sort of a thing, but I think sometimes God just says no to every other thing, you know, we're sitting there, and there's something hurting, there's something wrong, and it can be very painful in our life, it may be a person, it may be a relationship, it may be our marriage, it may be our child, it may be something that is so, you know, painful, we can hardly

stand up straight, and then we want everybody in the world to help us, and nobody can, nobody, there's nobody, and we can forgive, and we can love, and we can do all sorts of things, but here, I believe, is when Jesus turns, he says, but when you fast, you come, do you, and I've designed times in life where I'm going to shut off every other access, and not that I want to make

life tough for you, because out of these times, I'm going to let you discover something about me that few people ever get to know, that I'm going to reveal something of myself, and my power, and my goodness to you that you didn't know until you had to go through this time, and you had to experience that, and through these times in life is, I believe, where God allows, and you know, times where it opens up heaven, we deny, we set it aside, and say, God, this is a work I don't believe humanly can be done, I don't believe there's, you know, a way to resolve this thing, a way to get the wisdom, a way to get the, how do I get rid of this enemy, whether it's, you know, the, the Amalekites, or the Moabites, or how do I deal with this battle we've got out there, or how do I get through this

trial, and sometimes the Lord says you fast, you come, and you deny yourself, and you sit before me, and you pour out your heart, yes, you pray, and yes, you forgive, and you know, of any, and in every area you need to, but then you just sit there, and you seek, you know, an insight that isn't going to come until you wait upon me, and there will be some times, and I think the sad thing is, is sometimes I look at marriages, and I see battles that go on for years, see sometimes couples that, it's like the five year, ten years, the same things in their life, and in their marriage, go on, and on, and on, and they forgive, and they do this, they do that, but I think there's something powerful when somebody says, God, this is what we need in our life, or this is what we need in our home, you

know, it's interesting in, in Corinthians, Paul even says about a married couple, he says, defraud you not one another, except you'd be for consent for a time, that you may give yourselves to fasting and prayer, and come together, that Satan may tempt you not, but here he's even saying they're a married couple, sometimes he said, you know, and it's not necessarily about their marriage, but it definitely can just be, God, we're not getting along, we are not agreeing on things, or there's these problems with our children, or there's this issue, or there's that issue, and sometimes, God, I believe, out of his love, and his desire, he kind of sits there, and he lets us run through a whole gamut of all the things, that, well, let's see, I got a good book, hey, so-and-so read a book, and here,

you get so-and-so praying for you, God is, God answers so-and-so's prayers, and so you get the book, and you get so-and-so praying, and then you need this ten steps over here, somebody else has gotten, if you get a little counsel by this, and we're running all over, and we got this, and we got that, and I think sometimes God just stands back, and says, I wish you needed me, all by yourself, I wish there was somebody who wanted it so much, you could just step away from everything, and everybody, you could turn off all the gadgets, and all the things, and all the plans, and all the little smart stuff you think you got going, and just come, and deny yourself, and sit in my presence, I'll tell you, when you leave, you'll be the richest person you ever met, you'll have something powerful, and

you'll have an answer, and you may see me in heaven work in the most amazing way, and when we desire a thing like a Christian home, Satan attacks that, he hates them, and if he can get you fighting, if he can get you not getting along, it's just human nature not to get along, but in so often, but it's God's nature, you know, to turn us around, and to fix us, you know, we're men, we're always trying to be, I got to be the head, I'm tough, I'm the leader, and the wife, you know, whatever else, like the story of the three fellas talking at the office about, I'm the head of my home, boy, to my wife, she does what I tell her, and they're

going back, and these two of them are talking about it, one of them's not saying a thing, finally, they look over at him, and he said, well, how about you,

are you that at home, and he said, well, the other night, my wife came crawling onto me on her hands and knees, they said, really, then what, she told me if I, I better get out from under the bed and fight like a man, but the, I mean, we got, there's problems in homes, or fight like men, or women, or something else, and instead of fighting like Christians, they get on their knees before God, and we deny ourself, and say, God help us, and God work, and the thing is, is that when we do this, here Jesus is saying, this is the secret of giving, it's the secret of prayer, it's fasting, it brings you into this wonderful need for God, it brings God wonderfully into the reality, and deeply involved in your life, where you've separated from everything else, and say, God, please help us, and here,

it's something there that wonderfully, you know, so often we describe Christianity as a personal relationship with Christ, we tell everybody that, what, you know, a Christian is somebody that has a personal relationship with Jesus, sometimes I wonder if Jesus wouldn't sit there and say, I don't think it's very personal, you're always with a crowd, when you're with me, I'd love it to be personal, I'd love you just to leave the crowd, walk away from the crowd, and walk away from everything else, make it wonderfully personal, cry out to me there, pour out your heart to me there, and, and, and fast, and pray, forgive there, watch the insight I'll give you, watch the power that can flow into your life, and I think oftentimes that many of our marriage problems, and many of our family problems,

and many of our career problems, they aren't, they're, they're not family or marriage problems as much as they're fasting and prayer problems, and many of our child problems, that we think it's a child, sometimes it's a, it's a fasting and prayer, and our, and our business problems, and our career problems, you know, are ones there, the, I think the Lord may look and say, in the final analysis, it was a fasting and prayer, was when somebody would come and open up their heart and say, God, just you and me, and we're going to sit together through this thing until we get an answer, and if you can save me five more years, I'd love it, and the work he does, when we'll do that, he loves us, he wants a close personal relationship with us, and sometimes we live with things, I think, for many

years, because we don't want one as personal as he does, and we just, we lose, and that's that.

We'll pick it up next time. Let's pray.

Father, we do want to thank you for your love and for your word. Lord, I pray that we would look at spiritual life and realize I want life with Father, with my Father. Lord, maybe tonight some of us need to come and, and forgive, first of all.

Maybe we've been holding people hostage in our heart and our life for years and years. Almost like a little teddy bear, we hold on to the lack of forgiveness, what they did to us, and yet, Lord, what we have done to you, and yet, Lord, you love and forgive so totally, and Lord, you want us to do that, and I pray that we would look and be filled with forgiveness. Lord, maybe in our homes, our families, our relationships, Lord, just to look and say, I love you, and I forgive you, and Lord, have that heart that just holds nobody hostage, but reaches out and embraces, and then, Lord, when still that may not solve everything, Lord, that when you would call us aside and say, you know something, this is one I've designed.

You're used to helping all sorts of other ways to have things solved, and most of the time, many times, that works, but here I want you for myself. I want you to come and sit and open your heart, seek me, cry out to

me, deny yourself, turn off all the gadgets and the stuff, move away from all the entertainment and the pleasures and the things that so satisfy and be able to say, I won't be satisfied, God, until I get my answer from you. I don't want to ever be satisfied again, God, until my happiness and my entertainment is you.

I won't be satisfied. I don't want to be satisfied by anything else that can satisfy me until I get a voice and a word from heaven on this. Lord, may we understand that is tremendously important to you, and it ought to be to us, so take your word.

Minister to us. Strengthen our lives in Jesus' name. Amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/8/SID8710.mp3>
Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/don-mcclure/forgiveness/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net